Top Secret [redacted]

BOLIVIA: Election Prospects

The likelihood of a coup before the June elections is diminishing, but the outlook for democracy remains poor. [redacted]

Under President Gueiler's auspices, conservative military and leftist labor leaders met this week and issued a joint communique guaranteeing the elections and the constitutional process--an initiative that received considerable popular support. In addition, the Interior Minister, who serves as liaison between the military and the President, met separately with key political leaders and urged them to reach an accord to avoid either an electoral stalemate or a weak compromise government. [redacted]

One leading presidential candidate, however, still refuses to come to a preelectoral agreement with his chief rival. Many officers now believe they should take no action to preempt the elections, arguing that the politicians' own ineptness will lead to disorder and thus prompt a popular outcry for military intervention. [redacted]

Labor leader Juan Lechin, who negotiated the agreement with the military, views the pact as only a temporary truce. Lechin expects electoral fraud to provide the armed forces with the excuse to intervene. [redacted]

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Top Secret [redacted]
3 May 1980

Approved for Release
Feb 2009